

Montezuma Road Reopens at Washout Site

Two-way traffic is restored over the Snake River with completion of a new 70-foot bridge

For Immediate Release: Sept. 4, 2014

Contacts:

Thad Noll, Assistant County Manager: 970-453-3438

Robert Jacobs, County Engineer: 970-668-4212

SUMMIT COUNTY – Montezuma Road opened to two-way traffic across a new bridge over the Snake River Thursday evening, restoring vehicle access where high water washed out the road June 3.

“We’re so excited that this fabulous new bridge is in place, and life can go back to normal for the residents of Montezuma, who’ve exhibited remarkable patience and community spirit over the past three months,” County Commissioner Karn Stiegelmeier said. “And we’re grateful to the Summit County Road and Bridge and Engineering departments, whose continuous hard work and commitment have been instrumental at every step of the way.”

The 70-foot concrete bridge replaces a 60-inch-diameter culvert that was destroyed during the June flooding. The capacity of the channel beneath the new bridge exceeds 1,300 cubic feet per second (cfs). Engineers’ estimates place the maximum probable flow of the Snake River at 600 cfs at the site.

Summit County Road and Bridge staff inspected the culvert on the morning of June 3, prior to the washout, and found it clear and functioning normally. Later that day, high water on the Snake River carried debris from upstream that collapsed the culvert and forced the river onto the road. The flooding washed out a 45-foot section of road and caused an additional one-half mile of severe road damage.

“With the new bridge in place, this kind of incident will never be a concern at this location again,” Summit County Engineer Robert Jacobs said. “The capacity of the crossing is now more than double what we’d ever expect to see during a flood event.”

The new bridge was designed and manufactured offsite during the summer by Transpan Bridges. Last week, the company used a crane to set the 48,000-pound pre-cast abutments and 100,000-pound pre-stressed outer deck pieces. Final site preparations and paving took place this week.

“We want to extend special thanks and congratulations to Transpan Bridges’ Doug Jatcko for the expertise and hard work he put into this project, especially in light of the fact that he’s getting married tomorrow,” Jacobs said.

The project would not have been completed as quickly without the assistance of the Environmental Protection Agency. EPA contributed \$180,000 in technical assistance and site preparation, which significantly shortened the project timeline. The early completion of the bridge will allow the agency to conduct scheduled cleanup work at the Pennsylvania Mine, where a multi-year project is under way to mitigate the flow of toxic contaminants into Peru Creek from past mining activity.

In the weeks ahead, the Summit County Road and Bridge Department will remove the temporary vehicle bridge and the pedestrian bridge that were installed upstream of the washout. Minor traffic interruptions may occur during the removals. Crews will work to revegetate the temporary road this fall and/or next spring, as time and weather permit.

###

Julie Sutor
Public Affairs Coordinator
Summit County Government
julies@co.summit.co.us
970-453-3498 (o)
970-409-9461 (m)